SOCIAL ISSUES

Police outnumber the crowd at Klan rally

One arrest at low-key event

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Gazette Telegraph

Everyone got what they wanted Friday afternoon during a low-key recruiting rally held by the Ku Klux Klan.

The Klan got about five locals that appeared sympathetic and maybe wanted to join. Officials say they'd be happy with just one new member.

Counterdemonstrators got to hold up signs denouncing the Klan, but did not get into a shouting match when taunted by a Klan speaker.

And more than 50 police officers got a crowd of about 40 people, all on good behavior.

Colorado Springs all but ignored the rally at the Four Diamond softball complex on North Nevada Avenue. Last year's rally, held downtown, drew a crowd of about 140 onlookers.

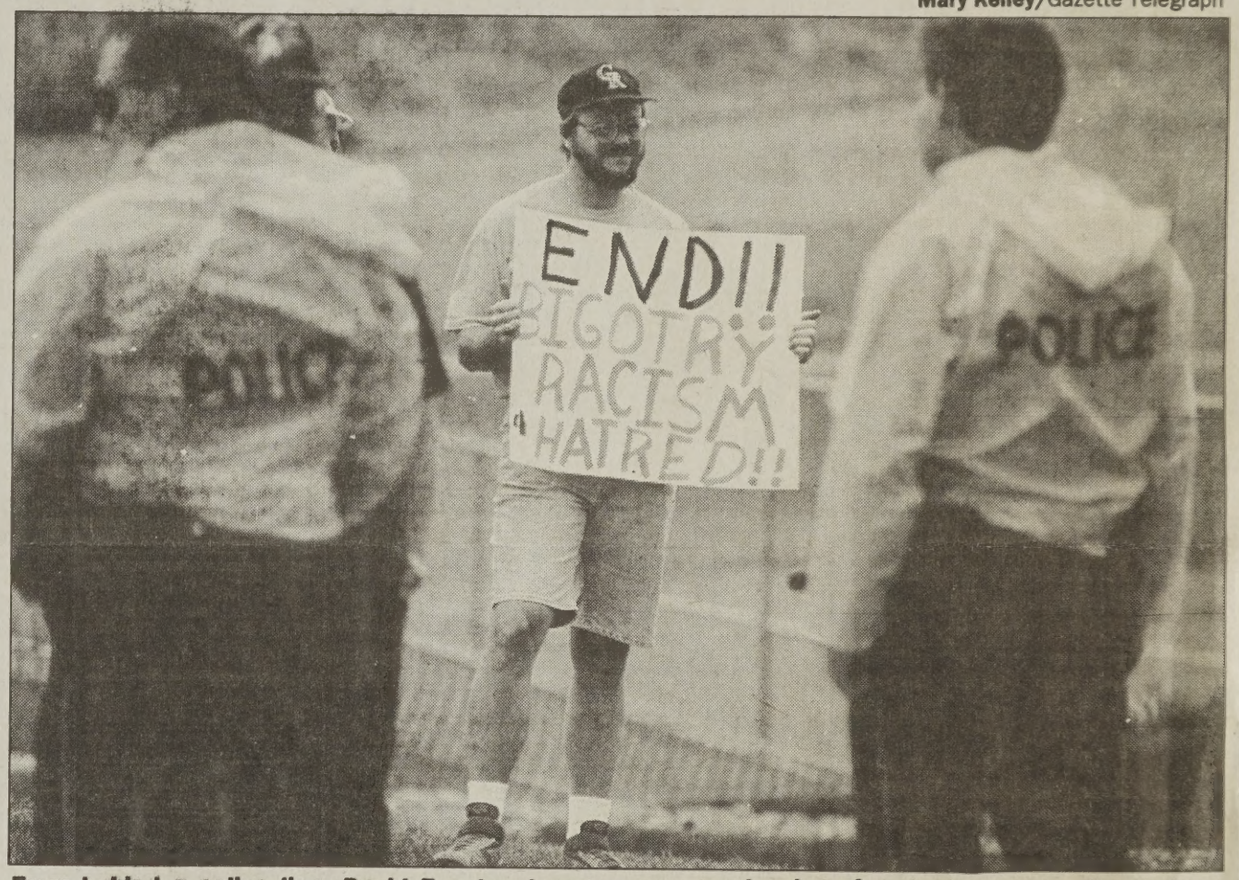
Only one arrest was made Friday — a man carrying a concealed weapon was stopped at the parking lot entrance.

The 28 Klan members, who drove down from Denver, were in high spirits, applauding speakers and shouting support for each other.

"I couldn't ask for a better place," said Shawn Slater, Colorado's Klan director. He said he appreciates Colorado Springs as a stronghold of American patriotism and praised the city for being the birthplace of the "fight against hate-monger, homosexual trash."

Thomas Robb, national director of the Klan, gave an emotional speech, saying the founding fathers did not fight to make America a country that offers handouts to every minority group and that "White Europeans are the bedrock of the American dream."

Mary Kelley/Gazette Telegraph



From behind a police line, David Fancheryisrael makes his feelings known Friday. He said the meager showing of protesters proves the Ku Klux Klan is merely a radical fringe group.

He also decried the pending free trade agreement with Mexico that he said would take jobs away from white Americans. And he called for troops along the U.S.-Mexico border and a quarantine of all "AIDS carriers," termed President Clinton and former President George Bush traitors, and asked all white Americans to join him.

A 19-year-old who identified himself only as Brian said he came to get information on joining the KKK. "I support them," said the Pikes Peak Community College student. "People are kinda looked down on for being white."

On the other side of the wire, holding placards, was David Fancheryisrael, 30, of Pueblo.

"I feel like you have to stand up against bigotry and hatred," he said. "Unless you look bigotry and hatred in the eye and stare it down, it will always find a way to rise up."

Michelle Nobriga, 17, who is of Portugese/Spanish/French descent, was visiting from Hawaii.

"I was a bit interested in politics here where it's legal to discriminate against homosexuals and have the KKK," she said. "I'm here to observe. I have really bad feelings about this. I don't see how a group that pushes for the rights of whites in a country where they are still obviously dominant could have peaceful intentions."

Trisha McElroy and her boss, local attorney Manuel Weiss, held signs saying, "Erase Supremacy, Embrace Equality," and "No KKK in the U.S.A."

"I think the statement has to be made that the KKK is unwelcome in Colorado," Weiss said. "They have no place in our society, nor the violence they commit."

TE

ould we raise public-land grazing fees?

Jay Gentry drives yearling cattle to private grazing land near Rifle Creek last year before moving them to U.S. Forest Service land later.

s: Bring cattle ranching into the 20th century

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stand at $1.86 per "animal unit month," or AUM. According to the National Agricultural Statistics Service, the average value in 1990 was $8.70 per AUM. An exhaustive study conducted by independent appraisers for a 1985 report to Congress determined that fair market value fees then averaged more than four times the federal fee.

Grazing fees now cover only a

On a Westwide scale, decades of overgrazing have left the ranges badly damaged. Soils have been washed away; watersheds degraded; valuable forage grasses have been depleted and replaced by mesquite and creosote bush; perennial streams have dried up; water tables have fallen; once-abundant wildlife has become rare.

Restoring our public rangelands to health does not require

allotment.

Targets should be written into annual grazing permits for each allotment. Credits should be determined by objective, on-the-ground monitoring of vegetation and soil stability, to minimize subjective judgments. The program should focus on improving the condition of the underlying resources of soil, water, and vegetation that are the productive